

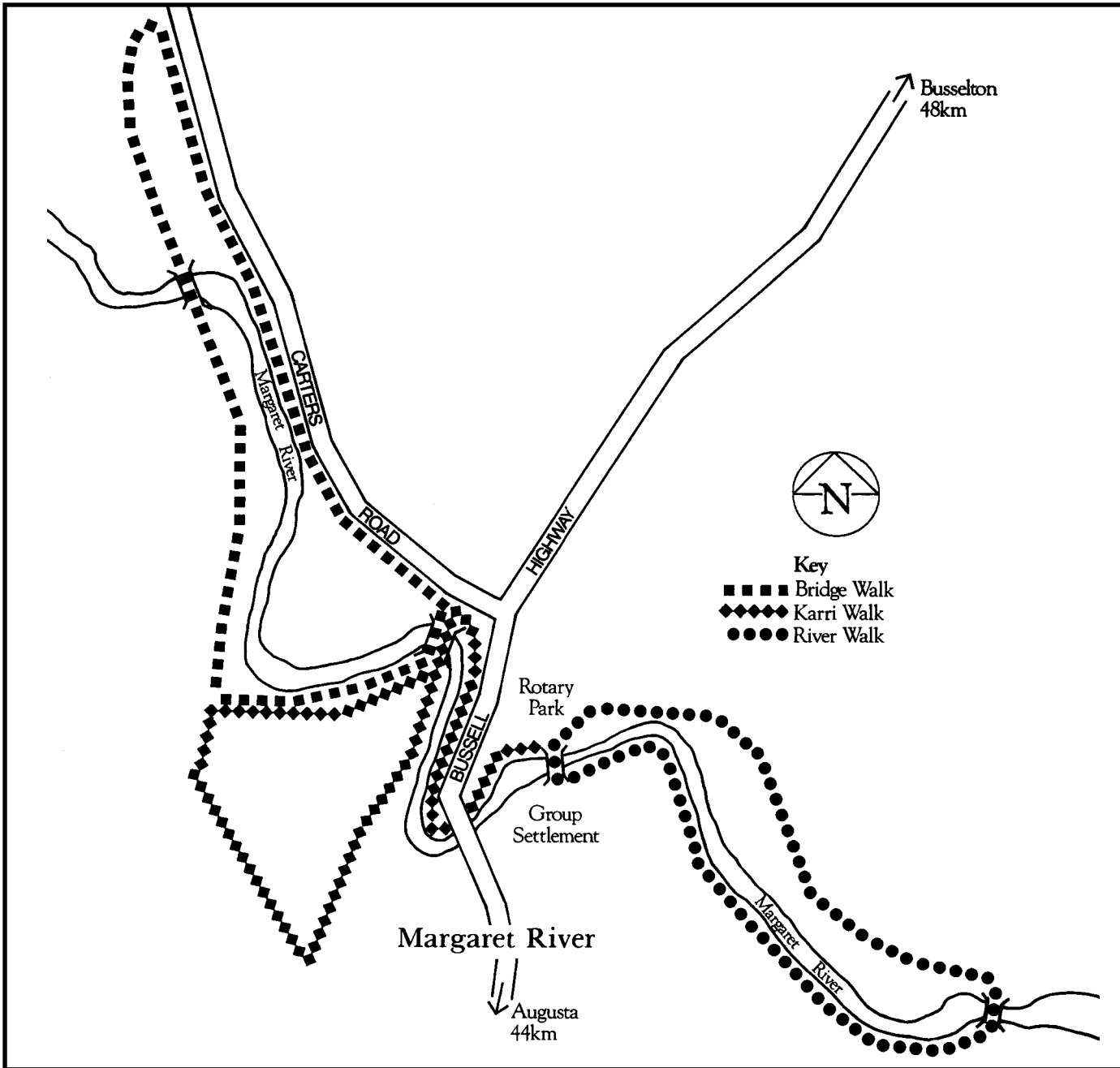
HERITAGE TRAIL



— MARGARET RIVER —



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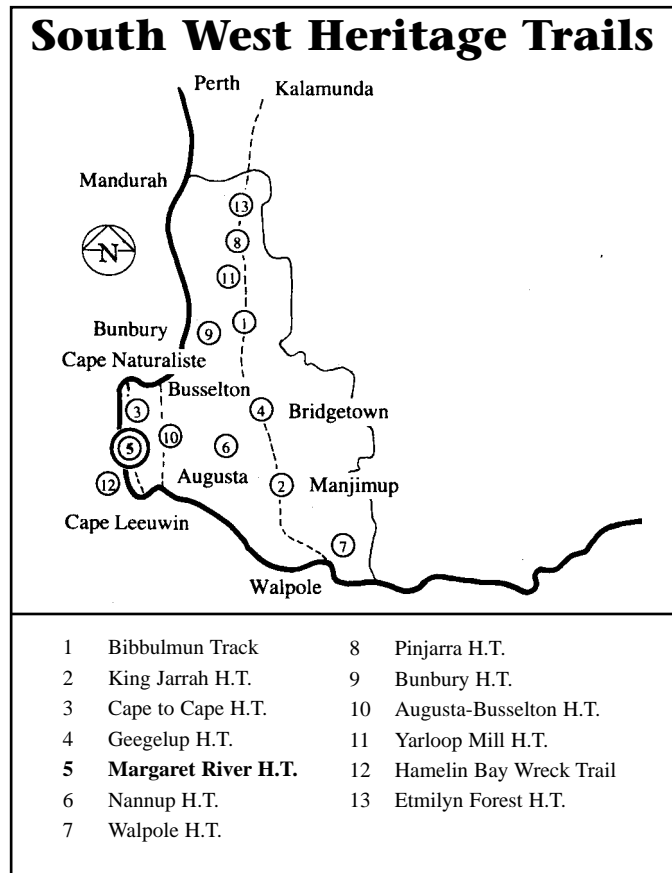
Front cover: Aboriginal Legend – The Creation of the Margaret River. (See page 3).

History

The Margaret River Heritage Trail is part of the Heritage Trails Network, a project for community participation originally devised by the Western Australian Heritage Committee (now known as the Heritage Council of Western Australia) in commemoration of the 1988 Bicentenary.

The Heritage Trails Network which was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments under the Commonwealth/State Bicentennial Commemorative Program was established to provide the Community with a Statewide network of "Heritage Trails" - routes designed to enhance awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

The map below illustrates Heritage Trails in the South West region of Western Australia.



Margaret River is 283km south of Perth along the South Western and Bussell highways, a drive of about three hours.

The Trails

1. The **River Walk** is a 2km circuit following the river along the southern bank and the old railway on the northern bank.
2. The **Karri Walk**, on the western side of Bussell Highway, meanders through natural bushland and along the riverbank for 1.5kms.
3. The **Bridge Walk** is a 3km trail retracing a section of Carters Road, and featuring the old railway bridge and a huge single karri.

All of the walks are easy, and at a leisurely pace offer a pleasant half-day's outing with opportunities for picnicking, nature studying and swimming.

Please Note: All trails may be affected by flooding during the winter months.

Persons using these trails do do at their own risk.

Introduction

The first European exploration of the Margaret River district occurred in the 1830s, when settlers from Augusta travelled overland in search of more fertile farming land. During his 1831 expedition to the Vasse River, John Garrett



Margaret River Town, 1938.

Bussell of Augusta observed "several small streams – to the West" and wrote in his journal:

"one very large and in it a basin into which rapids fell about 15 yards across – very deep. We forded it at the rapids but not dry footed; this stream which rolls along much more water than the Vasse can never fail..."

It is believed he later named this river in honour of his cousin Margaret Wyche.

Settlement in the Margaret River region began when John Bussell's younger brother Alfred, and his wife Ellen, established properties at Ellensbrook (1855) and Wallcliffe (1865). Other settlers soon followed, with Robert Lockhart, Stewart Keenan, James Forest and Nathaniel Abbey all taking up pastoral leases in the surrounding district.

Before the construction of Burnside Bridge in 1878, settlers were forced to cross the river by ford or sandbar. In 1894 timber entrepreneur Maurice Coleman Davies built a new bridge (below the site of the present Margaret River bridge), for traffic passing through the district to his mill settlement at Karridale. With travellers journeying from Busselton to Karridale and Augusta, Margaret River was soon operating as a wayside depot. Tom Higgins established the first residence and changing post for horses in what would become the township of Margaret River. Settlement gradually increased and in 1912 the Margaret River townsite was surveyed and gazetted the following year, with Higgin's house operating as the local post office.



Group Settlement.

In 1921 the government introduced the Group Settlement Scheme. Designed to encourage immigrants to take up land in the south-west, the scheme subsidised the settlers' land, stock and general agricultural costs. The Group Settlement Scheme was discontinued in 1930.

Although the original townsite was officially gazetted north of the river, the settlement developed on its southern banks. In 1923 the first store was opened in Carters Road, just off Karridale Road (now Caves Road). With the completion of the Busselton-Augusta railway in 1924, the town of Margaret River continued to expand. A new hall and a hotel were built in 1936. Since then Margaret River's growth has been spurred on by the development of the wine and tourism industries in the 1960s and 70s.

Today Margaret River is a thriving community, with people of diverse talents pursuing agricultural interests and practising many forms of art and craft.

The Creation of A River

According to the childhood memories of Alfred Bussell's son, Alfred Jnr, the area around Margaret River formed the backlands of the Aboriginal 'Koombarnup' (Bunbury) tribal territory. The Aborigines of 'Koombarnup' would make regular hunting trips to Margaret River, building fresh 'mias' (huts) out of bush materials used on previous visits.



Quiet tranquility of the Margaret River.

Bussell recorded the Aboriginal name of Margaret River as 'Wooditchup', after Wooditch – the magic man of a local tribe. According to Aboriginal legend Wooditch fell in love with a young tribal woman, Milyan. Although Milyan reciprocated Wooditch's feelings, her father, Ngungargoot, had already promised her to Wooditch's elder brother. The young couple decided to run away from the tribe.

Ngungargoot pursued the young couple, so Wooditch threw his 'magic stick' to the ground and "ordered a big river to run between himself and the old man..." Wooditch guided the river into the sea, while the old man shouted curses at the renegade couple. Wooditch then transformed him into a 'kartern' (fish), which the couple later speared for food. However, concerned by Milyan's sorrow over the loss of her father, Wooditch returned the old man to his original form and Ngungargoot was reunited with the young couple.

Rotary Park

All three trails begin at Rotary Park, the site of the first settlement in Margaret River. The steam engine as the entrance to the park was brought to Karridale by Maurice Coleman Davies in 1890, and named 'Kate' after his daughter. Davies was granted a concession licence in 1878 to cut karri timber at Coodardup (now Kudardup), near Augusta. Timber would run on wooden rails from the mill to the winter port of Flinders Bay or the summer port of Hemelin Bay. Davies' operation at Karridale introduced the long length karri timber to the world.



'Kate' at Karridale during 1890s.

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For those interested in M.C. Davies' early timber enterprise, the Hamelin Bay Wreck Trail explores the wrecks of ships sunk in the bay while attempting to load timber. Booklet guides for the trail are available from the Augusta-Margaret River Tourist Bureau.

A section of the park has been redeveloped to form a recreation of a Group Settlement, which features an original group settlement home, blacksmiths, sawmill, stable, machinery and a resident potter and woodturner. Bramley school has also been relocated at Rotary Park. Built in 1922 to cater for the children of group settlers, it is now used as a community hall.



Bramley School, 1925.

River Walk

Busselton-Augusta Railway

The Western Australian Government Railways extended the line from Busselton in the early 1920s and it was officially opened through to Witchcliffe on Monday, October 20th, 1924. The railway had reached Augusta by 1926. Serving both farming and timber interests, the line greatly improved the lifestyle of the group settlers. As a line of communication between the settlers and marketing outlets, the railway had a great impact on the growth of the district.

In the mid 1950s the government embarked on a programme to reduce unprofitable rail services and despite vehement protests and desperate appeals from residents and their parliamentary representatives, the Busselton-Augusta railway was closed on July 1st, 1957.



Clematis

Wildflowers proliferate along the river banks and in spring the delicate lemon flower of the karri wattle is overshadowed by the brilliance of the coral vine and native wisteria. The beauty of the clematis recedes with the advent of summer and it is obvious to the observer why it is called 'Old Man's Beard'.



Golden Whistler.

Abundant birdlife is also to be seen along the trails with colourful parrots and the brilliant blue of the Splendid Wren silhouetted against the green of bracken and maidenhair ferns. The Pallid Cuckoo and Rainbow Bird can be observed from August to November and those with the time to be still and quiet, can enjoy the solitude and observe the Red-eared Firetail Finch or the Red Breasted Robin. Flashes of black and white can be observed as the New Holland Honeyeater darts from bush to bush and although rarely seen, the Brown Honeyeater fills the air with its beautiful song.



Mr. M. Coffey,
preparing log for the
bridge using
traditional methods.

Bridge Walk

Old Town Swimming Hole

The swimming hole was a popular social and recreational centre for the early settlers during the summer months. Although the ablution block has long since gone, the sounds of children laughing and swimming can still be heard on long summer days.



Old Town Swimming Hole.

Karri Tree

The single huge karri is a magnificent specimen of a 'Eucalyptus diversicolor'. Confronted with the magnitude of this tree it is easy to imagine the splendour of the legendary 'King Karri' at Boranup. This 342 foot tall and 30 foot diameter giant was knocked down in the gale of 1900 when three ships were sunk in Hamelin Bay.

Old Railway Bridge

This bridge was built in 1923 as part of the Busselton to Margaret River railway. The extension connected with an existing railway running north from Flinders bay.



Railway Bridge.

Karri Walk

Local Identities Named On Trail

The history of Margaret River is peopled with characters from all walks of life. Their diversity and dedication have paved the way for the tiny township to grow into the thriving centre we have today. Some of those people are named below.

Carters Road

This road was cleared in the 1890s by Minne and Grace Keenan, daughters of pioneer Stewart Keenan. These enterprising young women cut a track through the bush from Caves Road to just east of Burnside Road crossing, where they joined up with whim (log carrier) tracks cleared by Millar's teams hauling logs down to the head of the railway landing.

Carter's Road then follows approximately the line of the railway back to Bussell Highway. The Carter Brothers were later contracted to clear, widen and gravel the track in 1910.

Grace Bussell and Sam Isaacs

On December 1st, 1876 the *Georgette* ran aground at Calgardup and all 50 still on board were rescued by Grace Bussell (daughter of Alfred and Ellen) and Sam Isaacs, the Bussell's Aboriginal stockman. Those rescued were taken to Wallcliffe to recuperate. Both Grace and Sam were awarded medals of bravery for their efforts.

Loaring and McLeod

Loaring and McLeod purchased Wallcliffe in 1902 and sold it back to the Bussell family in 1910 when Marmaduke Terry bought it for his wife, Filumena (daughter of Alfred and Ellen Bussell).

Mr Loaring was a valued member of the founding Margaret River Community Progress Association and School.



Willmott family and friends before the building of Basildene, 1912.

Willmott

Percival Willmott was the Leeuwin Lighthouse keeper and came to Margaret River in 1910. Willmott and Thomas Higgins erected a kerosene tin shack until the imposing residence of 'Basildene' was built in 1912.

The Margaret River Heritage Trails were developed by the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, which would like to thank the following:

- Commonwealth Employment Programme Scheme
- CEP Gang
- Augusta-Margaret River Shire History Group
- Mr Rex Dyer
- Cover Design – P. Wise
- Clive Slater

Photographs

- Margaret River Town, 1938, courtesy of Mrs. M. Wise.
- Group Settlement, courtesy Tom Doyle Collection.
- Quiet tranquility of the Margaret River, courtesy Mr K. Tritton.
- 'Kate' at Karridale during the 1890s, courtesy Batty Library.
- Bramley School, 1925, courtesy Mrs. Vi McGregor.
- Golden Whistler, courtesy Babs and Burt Wells.
- Mr M. Coffey preparing log for bridge, courtesy Mr K. Waddington.
- Old Town Swimming Hole, courtesy Mrs M. Wise.
- Railway Bridge, 1988, courtesy Mr K. Tritton.
- Wilmott family and friends before the building of Basildene, 1912. Courtesy Mrs M. Wilmott.
- Approach to Margaret River, courtesy M. Wise.



Approach to Margaret River, 1940s

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| <p>Augusta Historical Society</p> <p>Blond, P.E.M.</p> <p>Cresswell, G.J.,</p> <p>Erickson, R.</p> <p>Green, R.H.N.</p> <p>Hasluck, A.</p> <p>Lynne, K.J.</p> <p>Payne, J.D.</p> <p>Rose, D. & Bradford, H.</p> <p>Terry, F.</p> <p>Turner, T.</p> | <p>In and Around Augusta-Margaret River. (1986).</p> <p>A tribute to the Group Settlers. (U.W.A. Press, Nedlands, W.A. 1987).</p> <p>The Light of Leeuwin: The Augusta-Margaret River Shire History (Margaret River, 1989).</p> <p>The Dempsters. (U.W.A. Press, Nedlands W.A. 1978).</p> <p>During the Passage of Time. (Access Press, Perth W.A. 1986).</p> <p>Portrait with a Background. (Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1955).</p> <p>Thirteen Decades, A Short History of the Margaret River District. (Essay, Claremont Teachers College, 1960).</p> <p>Over the Bridge. (Local Publication).</p> <p>Settlers of Margaret River. (Local Publication).</p> <p>They Came To The Margaret. (Margaret River Print 1984).</p> <p>Turners of Augusta. (Patterson & Brokensha, Pty. Ltd. Perth, 1956).</p> |
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